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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 BAGHDAD 000984

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PROP](#) [PTER](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: REQUEST TO CLOSE DOWN AL-RAFIDAYN SATELLITE TV

Classified By: POL-MIL MINISTER-COUNSELOR MARCIE B. RIES, REASONS 1.4(B)  
) AND (D)

[¶1.](#) (SBU) The Al-Rafidayn Satellite Channel is a Cairo-based Iraqi television channel that appears to be affiliated with the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS) -- a group of Sunni clerics led by Harith al-Dari -- and which adopts a pro-resistance, anti-U.S., anti-Iraqi Government, and anti-Iran editorial line, according to a survey conducted between February 24 and March 8, 2008. Al-Rafidayn's newscasts highlight statements by the AMS and use value-laden terminology venerating the "resistance" and disparaging the U.S. "occupation" and the Iraqi Government. Its talk shows feature commentators who adopt a similar line. The channel also broadcasts short videos, poems, and songs that promote the "valiant resistance" and its attacks on U.S. forces.

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REQUEST FOR INSTRUCTIONS  
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[¶2.](#) (S/NF) Post requests that the Department instruct Embassy Cairo to urge the Government of Egypt to take action against Al-Rafidayn Satellite Channel based on its incitement of acts of terror against the Iraqi government and Coalition Forces in Iraq and its apparent efforts to radicalize its viewers.

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GENERAL BACKGROUND  
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[¶3.](#) (SBU) The following background material, provided for the use of the Department and Embassy Cairo, was drawn from an Open Source Center Media Aid report entitled "Iraq -- Survey of Al-Rafidayn Satellite Channel" dated March 17, 2008.

[¶4.](#) (SBU) Al-Rafidayn began broadcasting from Cairo's Media City on April 10, 2006, after approximately six months of test transmissions. Officials affiliated with the channel say that it seeks to present an independent Iraqi perspective. According to Al-Rafidayn's website ([www.alrafidain.tv](http://www.alrafidain.tv)), the channel has offices currently operating in Damascus, Amman, and Gaza. Its main offices are in Cairo. In a November 14, 2007 report, the Egyptian Government news agency MENA reported that the Egyptian Media Production City "contracted with Al-Rafidayn to lease Bourse Studio for broadcasting the station's programs as of March 2008."

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PRO-AMS, PRO-'RESISTANCE' EDITORIAL LINE  
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[¶5.](#) (U) During the survey period, the channel led its daily

six newscasts and five news summaries with statements or press releases by the AMS or its leaders. In its main newscasts, the station typically carried entire statements or press releases posted on the AMS website. An interview with an AMS leader or figure often followed.

¶6. (U) The station aired claims of responsibility for attacks on US forces by "resistance factions" and showed footage of the attacks with the logo of the armed group claiming credit. Al-Rafidayn broadcast eight videos during the 14-day survey period, excluding repeats in subsequent newscasts during the day.

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ANTI-U.S., ANTI-GOI LINE  
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¶7. (U) Al-Rafidayn consistently highlighted U.S. casualties at the hands of the "valiant Iraqi resistance" and cited "eyewitness" accounts of "atrocities" and "violations" committed by U.S. and Iraqi forces. The station's anchorpersons posed no critical questions to the "eyewitnesses" or challenged their assertions.

¶8. (U) On February 29, Al-Rafidayn cited "eyewitnesses" as saying that "U.S. occupation troops executed five members of a family and arrested a woman and a child in Al-Hamad village in southern Ba'qubah."

¶9. (U) On February 24, the channel reported that the "U.S. occupation is in a bitter situation in Iraq. Its human and material losses at the hands of the men of the valiant Iraqi resistance, who dealt hard blows to the occupation's targets

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and strategic centers and undoubtedly made Iraq a graveyard for the U.S. Army, are constantly increasing. In only two days, the U.S. occupation suffered heavy human losses as five of its soldiers were killed in two separate operations in Baghdad and Mosul."

¶10. (U) The channel's announcers were observed to editorialize when introducing reports of U.S. and Iraqi forces' operations, using inflammatory language to disparage the "occupation." In its March 7 newscast, the channel reported on a bombing in Al-Karradah, saying that "the situation in Iraq is nothing but destruction and damage. The smell of death is everywhere. It (Iraqi Government) has turned a blind eye to the bitter conditions in which Iraqis are living and sought to achieve their ambitions and serve the goals of its masters in the White House and elsewhere. The victim is always the Iraqi citizen."

¶11. (U) On February 24, the station reported on security incidents across Iraq by saying: "Moving to the deteriorating security situation in the country, where the acts of killing, violence, and destruction at the hands of the occupation forces, the current government, and the sectarian militias claim the lives of Iraqis, six people were killed or wounded when an explosive charge went off in the Al-Saydiyah area in southwestern Baghdad."

¶12. (U) The station used terms such as "agent" and "current government" -- implying that the government is temporary -- when referring to the Iraqi Government. The channel adopted similar terms for the Iraqi Army other Iraqi security services. The channel was not observed to use the term "martyred" when referring to Iraqi security personnel who were killed in armed operations or terrorist attacks, a term it did use when reporting the deaths of "resistance men."

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'EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW' PROGRAM  
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¶13. (U) "Exclusive Interview" is a 55-minute program

presented by Layth al-Hasani. The program is carried at 2000 on Fridays. On February 29, the program discussed the "culture of resistance and its Iraqi, Arab, and international dimensions." The program discussed various facets of Iraqi "resistance," including the concept, methods, and difference between "resistance and terrorism." The program guests were Dr Nizar al-Samarra'i, writer and political analyst, and Dr Fadil al-Rubay'i, Iraqi writer and researcher. Al-Samarra'i argued that the "Americans have come with their modern war machine(to subdue the will of the Iraqi people." He added that the Iraqi "resistance" is not carried out by "infiltrators" and is the Iraqis' "natural" reaction. Al-Samarra'i called on all Muslims to engage in jihad. He claimed that there is a "limited" number of Arabs fighting in Iraq."

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'YOU ARE MOST WELCOME' PROGRAM  
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¶14. (U) "You Are Most Welcome" is a live phone-in program presented by Sarmad Akram and carried at 1730 GMT on Thursdays and repeated at 1307 GMT on Fridays, at 0805 on Saturdays, and at 1100 on Mondays. The program invites callers to discuss topics that Akram introduces.

¶15. (U) On February 28, the presenter stated, "Iraq and the bitter harvest. In 2003, the forces of destruction collectively attacked Iraq under many pretexts(during the horrible incursion, America and those with it used the most powerful and state-of-the-art bombs to spread what America perceives as merciful democracy. Baghdad did not see anything from the democracy of the cowboys, other than killing, rape, arrests, and unidentified bodies." The program took calls from Iraqis who spoke about a "real tragedy" and criticized the "democracy of killing and displacement."

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'IN SEARCH OF LOST JOY' PROGRAM  
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16, (U) "In Search of Lost Joy" is 25-minute program focusing on the medical treatment that Iraqi children receive who have sustained injuries during military operations in Iraq. On 2 March, the show showed a little girl infirmed in a Jordanian

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hospital saying, "we daily pray may God kill the Americans."

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PRO-RESISTANCE, ANTI-U.S. PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL AIRED  
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¶17. (U) Al-Rafidayn carried inflammatory videos, poems, and songs to promote its opposition to the "U.S. occupation" and to support the "valiant resistance" and its attacks on U.S. forces. These videos run throughout the day, similar to commercial advertisements.

¶18. (U) "Al-Fallujah of Pride," an approximately seven-minute long poem in Iraqi dialect by Iraqi poet Ghadir al-Shammari, calls for dealing blows to "the enemy" and making it pay the price for its acts in Al-Fallujah, which should "be avenged." It praises "heroes" who do not fear the "enemy" and seek to defend the honor of Iraqi women and prisoners. The poem promises victory over the "enemy" and "infidels." It is carried against the backdrop of footage showing masked gunmen firing rockets and RPGs, attacks on U.S. vehicles, and Iraqi women weeping.

¶19. (U) The five-minute song "Amal al-Juburi (an Iraqi poet) and the Master of the White House" calls on President Bush to return Iraq as it was\*a country without "coffins." It says that "freedom is absent( When it came, extremism came with it, and violence spawned, death proliferated, fear grew rampant, and tyrants multiplied." It addresses the U.S.

President, saying "you are not the Christ. All the dead in my country and your country shout. For the sake of my country, I will not forgive you, O master of the White House." The song is carried against footage of President Bush in meetings, Iraqis carrying coffins, crying women, war protests, U.S. soldiers, bodies on the ground, and children in hospitals.

¶20. (U) The two-minute promotion spot "Democracy, the American Way," opens with a fast-moving video collage showing a U.S. soldier pointing his gun, a mosque's dome being shelled, a U.S. soldier giving the thumbs up, U.S. soldiers taking position behind a window, a U.S. tank breaching a wall, U.S. soldiers on rooftops taking aim, a U.S. soldier dragging a person by the collar, and soldiers pulling a person out of his car. An unidentified Iraqi says that on March 12, 2006, "someone told me all members of the family of the late Qasim Hamzah Rashid were killed and their house was burned. I entered the house with my wife and was shocked and horrified. I saw Qasim's daughter's body on fire and her head completely smashed. When I searched for the other members of the family, I found them in another room. The father's head was completely smashed. I also found the body of a three-or-four-year-old girl with bullet holes, lying on the floor near her father." He claimed the first daughter "was raped."

¶21. (U) Another promotion spot on the "suffering" of Iraqi kids said: "A joy killed by the occupation; a childhood deprived of life; shining lips and faces the occupation has deprived of smiles; their play and fun turned into horror and fear. That is what the occupation has done to the kids of Iraq." The one-minute spot is carried against the backdrop of children at play.

¶22. (U) The promotion spot "I am an Iraqi Child" showed a child saying: "I am an Iraqi child. Despite my weak body, although they stole love from me, and despite the war against the innocence of childhood you see on my face and in my drawings, the pulse in my veins will tell those who are trying to kill me: I am alive; I am an Iraqi child." The one-minute promo is carried against footage of Iraqi children playing, U.S. soldiers raiding a house, and Iraqi students going to school.

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PRO-HAMAS SONGS  
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¶23. (U) Additionally, Al-Rafidayn aired songs highlighting the Palestinians' "suffering," including one that aired on 5 March praising the late HAMAS spiritual leader, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin.

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SHORT PROGRAMS ON SUFFERING UNDER U.S. 'OCCUPATION'  
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¶24. (U) In addition, the channel carried short programs showing the "suffering" and "miseries" of Iraqi children and Iraqis in general caused by the "US occupation." A 15-minute program entitled "Miseries Caused by The Occupation" about a girl who is a double amputee said, "The occupation, with its new democracy, caused another disaster(. The acts of killing and torture and the raids on secure people in their homes still occur under the pretext of combating terrorism and pursuing criminals. They now view all Iraqis as criminals and terrorists after they discovered that all Iraqis reject the occupation and its schemes. The soldiers of alleged liberation, therefore, vented their anger on civilians."

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SMS CRAWL ENCOURAGES 'JIHAD' AGAINST 'OCCUPIER' IN IRAQ  
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¶25. (U) Al-Rafidayn ran a Short Message Service (SMS) crawl answering questions on religious and social questions presumably sent by viewers on issues of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and "jihad," which was shown during a variety of programming. The following are some examples. Question: "I am an Arab citizen. Is jihad against the occupier in an occupied Arab country permitted, despite the fact that I do not fast or pray?" Answer: "Jihad is permitted. Pray and fast. Praying and fasting are religious duties imposed upon believers by God."

¶26. (U) Question: "Some say that the honorable messenger, God's peace and prayers be upon him, favored the pursuit of education over jihad. Is that true?" Answer: "If jihad is an individual duty, as is the case in Iraq to expel the occupation, nothing tops that, not even the pursuit of education."

¶27. (U) Question: "I am an 18-year-old student. Is jihad one of my duties?" Answer: "Jihad in Iraq is an individual duty imposed upon every Muslim man and woman, provided that he or she is capable of it."

¶28. (U) Question: "I am a mujahid and want to fight the occupier, but my mother objects because she is worried about me. Would martyrdom be permissible without her consent?" Answer: "Fighting the occupiers is an individual duty, and neither the father nor the mother has a say in it."

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WEBSITE AND ADDRESS INFORMATION  
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¶29. (U) The channel's website (www.alrafidain.tv) is under construction. Links on the home page -- Home, News, Programs, Reports, Articles, Who We Are, Members' Mail -- are inactive, except for the "News Headlines" link.

¶30. (U) A "Whois" search produced the following:

Registrant:

Al Rafidine Company For Radio & TV  
Media Production City, PO Box 15  
6th October City, Giza Giza  
EG

Administrative and Technical Contact:

Alaubaidi, Abdullah  
Media Production City, PO Box 15  
6th October City, Giza Giza  
EG  
2.028555789

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AL-RAFIDAYN PROGRAMMING STATISTICS  
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¶31. To determine the percentage of programming Al-Rafidayn devoted against Coalition forces, OSC quantified broadcast material according to the following categories: anti-Coalition; anti-Iraqi Government; reportage of Coalition materiel being damaged or destroyed including soldiers' deaths; anti-Iran; anti-sectarianism; neutral; AMS statements; and pro-terrorism. The following is a summary of the findings.

Total items observed: 2,415  
Items with anti-Coalition message, explicit or implied: 719 (29.8%)

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Items with anti-Iraqi Government message: 80 (3.3%)  
Items stating damage to Coalition: 126 (5.2%)  
Items with anti-Iran message: 66 (2.7%)  
Items with anti-sectarian message: 41 (1.7%)  
Neutral items: 1,328 (55%)

Items dealing with AMS not falling into another category: 55  
(2.3%)  
CROCKER